

MINUTES
of the
OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY GROUP (OHVAG)
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS
MEETING OF MAY 2, 2008
Carnegie Center
1101 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:05pm. Members introduced themselves by way of roll call, and Ms. Racki announced a quorum.

Committee Members Present: Hank Rogers
 Drew John
 Pete Pfeifer
 Rebecca Antle
 John Savino
 Robert Biegel

Committee Members Absent: Jim Schreiner

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Doris Pulsifer, Chief of Grants
 Amy Racki, OHV Coordinator

Other Individuals Present: Bill Gibson, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 Sandee McCullen, former OHVAG member
 Dave Scarborough, BLM
 Joe Sacco, Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD)

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

This item dispensed with, as roll call consisted of introductions.

C: NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Chair Rogers welcomed the newest OHVAG members, Bob Biegel and John Savino. Ms. Racki spoke on the orientation of the new members to OHVAG. She began by discussing the structure of the ASP Board, with its seven members and their representation of recreation, cattlemen, and land management. The Board is responsible for ultimate decisions regarding grant funds and other ASP fund-sources such as the gasoline tax that provides revenue for the OHV program and the Federal RTP funds. Ms. Racki said her role is to act as a liaison between the OHVAG and the ASP Board. The OHVAG vision is

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to enhance OHV recreation opportunities in Arizona, to promote educational programs around off-highway vehicle use, and to promote responsible riding, safety and social responsibility.

OHVAG was formed by the Governor in 1989 before the gas tax fund act was established. The gas tax of .055%, which created the OHV Recreation Fund was established in 1991. The OHVAG was incorporated under the ASP Board in 1996. The ASP Board helps provide guidance to the OHVAG and to the OHV programs.

Ms. Racki introduced the Chair, Hank Rogers and Vice-Chair, Drew John. She noted that new member John Savino sits on the group as a citizen-at-large member who also rides dirt bikes. That perspective will be new and welcome to OHVAG, as well as his knowledge of OHV use in the western side of the state (i.e. Lake Havasu). Bob Biegel is a Jeep enthusiast and represents Mesa 4-Wheelers. He is also a member of the OHV Ambassadors. Rebecca Antle was reappointed to a second three-year term as well.

OHVAG's successes are great even taking into consideration difficulties presented by state budget issues. One success was the Great Western Trail, the Natural Rules campaign, and the Pima Motor Sports Park. She noted that a list of OHVAG's accomplishments is available in the membership binder. The binder contains a membership roster, grant process information, legislation history, and travel reimbursement information. She mentioned that travel reimbursement is based on the state reimbursement rate. Chair Rogers asked whether the mileage reimbursement rate will be raised anytime soon. Ms. Racki said that she had not heard that the rate was under consideration.

Mr. Biegel asked whether his term began May 2, 2008 or on January 1, 2008 as would be the usual case. Ms. Racki said that officially the term began on May 2, 2008. The term expires on December 31, 2010.

Mr. Savino asked about whether or not he was eligible to be reappointed to a second term when this term is complete. The ASP Board had discussed disallowing Mr. Savino in his particular position to be replaced by an environmental group representative. Ms. Racki noted that that particular motion was voted down. Mr. Savino noted that he would be interested in seeing the minutes of the April 4, 2008 ASP Board meeting. Further discussion of the makeup of OHVAG during the next recruitment phase followed. OHVAG will consist of five OHV users, one citizen-at-large, and one representative of a sportsperson's group.

D. ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of Minutes from the February 1, 2008 Meeting.

Mr. John moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2008 meeting. Mr. Pfeifer seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

2. Presentation of FY2008 Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) Grant Applications.

Ms. Pulsifer noted that a list of the six applications received is available on page 21 of the agenda packet. These applications have not been reviewed or rated, but have been determined to be eligible applications. The total requested amount of the applications is \$1,359,188, and sufficient money is available to fund all the applications provided they are eligible and score well. Following page 21 are further details of the requested scope items for each application. Again, these scope items have not been reviewed.

Dave Scarborough of the BLM introduced himself as being available to answer questions on their application.

Mr. John asked whether Pima Motor Sports Park's (PMP) application would qualify as a project due to the prior history of this organization. Ms. McCullen responded that PMP is qualified as a trail system and the project should be acceptable. She also noted that PMP is open to the public, but will likely charge a fee. PMP will not be a park limited to being a competition venue. Mr. John asked about the withdrawal of the MotoTrax application, and whether it was withdrawn for similar reasons. Ms. Pulsifer said that MotoTrax had withdrawn because of issues with their National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) certification.

Mr. Savino asked about the PMP application, and whether their operation had been successful for the earlier project. Ms. McCullen said that this new application reflects improvements that should lead to PMP's future success. Ms. Antle asked whether she needed to file a conflict of interest because she has been involved with PMP in the past, but not recently. It was determined that she did not because she is not currently involved. She then noted that PMP had been managed in the past by several people, none of whom contributed to the success of the venue. PMP enjoys a good relationship with Pima County, who has provided a well and other amenities to the venue, however the County is now of a mind that the park needs to be self-sufficient. Ms. Antle is uncertain whether the current management can deliver a self-sufficient venue. Ms. McCullen noted that entrance fees have been reduced, and the track course has been improved, which should help draw in the public. They will also be adding a four-wheel drive course. Ms. Racki noted ASP contributed to fund the park in the past.

Mr. Savino then asked about the educational component of this project, and also whether the facility would be likely to draw enthusiasts away from open country and into the park. Ms. McCullen replied that both four-wheel drive and motorcycle safety education is taking place at the park, and as of yet, the park is not a draw away from open country. However, the hope is that competitions held at the park will be a draw for the public. Further discussion on PMP's history followed.

Ms. Racki noted that the only motion that results from these discussions should be to appoint a liaison to the grant rating team. Chair Rogers noted that PMP has been a

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perennial topic of discussion in OHVAG. He asked Ms. Antle for opinion on the project in this application. Ms. Antle said that building a rock-crawling area would definitely be a draw for the public, but that PMP's management has some issues to overcome before the venue can be completely successful. Further discussion on rock-crawling and rock-crawling competitions followed. Ms. McCullen emphasized that the rock-crawling area will be open to public with special rules, such as rock-crawlers using the facility as a group.

Mr. Savino asked whether this was owned by Pima County. Ms. Antle noted that the County owns PMP and it is run by a private concession. Mr. Savino said that the grant could then be considered an improvement to a County-owned facility. Ms. Antle also noted the education aspect, because safety training is going on at the PMP now. Chair Rogers asked about the promoter of events at PMP. Ms. McCullen noted the current park concessionaires are the promoters.

Mr. Savino asked whether the grant was going to cover only the rock-crawling area. He noted that though the improvement will be funded by the tax-payers, the rock-crawling public will be severely hampered from using the facility. Ms. McCullen noted that the venue will impose a calendar for users in order to make sure that vehicles are safe, and so on.

Chair Rogers asked if there were questions on the other applications. Mr. Savino asked about the BLM Lower Sonoran Field Office application, and whether it was truly for OHV use. The application looks to Mr. Savino as though it would fund a trailhead to an equestrian area, and how OHVs would be separate from the nature trail and the equestrian area. Mr. Scarborough said that off-route OHV is a problem in the area, and that this project is designed in phases that will help alleviate the issue. This particular application will be a beginning phase. Mr. Savino asked how the nature trail and equestrian area would be separate from the OHV user area. He is concerned that the multi-use features will create difficulties for both OHV users and equestrians. Mr. Scarborough says that the equestrian use will be a future feature. Mr. Savino asked whether the BLM was requesting funds to be approved by OHVAG to build a future equestrian site and hiking. He would like to know exactly where in the plans are OHV users accommodated. Mr. Scarborough noted that the application as it stands does not specifically provide for OHV use, but will help keep the facility open for future OHV use by providing facilities that will be useful and educational for all user, as well as improving access roads. Once this phase is complete, there will be some 80 miles of area available for OHV users. The public area to be constructed in the current application phase will not be restricted to equestrians or hikers, but will be available for OHV users. Mr. Savino says that he is concerned about the convergence of OHVs and horses in an area that already suffers from a poor reputation among OHV users. Mr. Scarborough noted that the concept provides a good portal access for multiple users where there is no access now. Signage alone will help regulate the interface between users.

Chair Rogers noted that multi-use trails in Colorado are very successful. However, he wants to maintain parity among users in the multi-use areas so that no users are deprived

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of the area. Mr. Scarborough noted that an overview of the larger area would help address some of these concerns, however he did not bring it. The education portion of this project will also address the multi-use concerns.

Mr. Biegel asked whether any route closure would take place if this project is not funded, and when the closure might happen, and also why any organization would expect funding from OHV sources if OHV routes will be closed. Mr. Scarborough said that he hopes that the OHV groups would be open to this project because it will lead to more opportunity in the future for OHV use. Any closure that might happen will be temporary unless this project happens. He sees this project as one way to obtain balance with multiple user groups and keep routes open. Mr. John said that the project is based on the hope of an OHV trail, rather than an existing area. Mr. Scarborough noted that there are currently 80 miles of routes available, however the OHV use currently is "wild". Further discussion on closures involving high-traffic areas followed.

Mr. Savino asked if there was any signage on the 80 miles. Mr. Scarborough said that there are route markers, though some have been lost, and there is not yet a map. More detailed signage will be available at the proposed visitor center. An OHVAG member asked if Mr. Scarborough and the BLM were working with an OHV club or organization regarding the issues in the area. Mr. Scarborough said that there had been no success in forming such a partnership despite the BLM's efforts to do so. Further discussion on public comment on the area followed.

Chair Rogers asked if there were questions about the BLM Safford application. Mr. John noted that this application was important because it is important to complete inventory in order to produce maps. He is happy to see an application that puts signage and mapping together. Proper signage and route marking is crucial.

Chair Rogers asked for questions about the application from the Coconino National Forest. Mr. Savino asked why OHVAG was expected to fund design and engineering in a signage project. Ms. Pulsifer said that the grant program allows for design and engineering costs to be funded, but those costs are limited to 10% of the grant amount.

Chair Rogers then asked if there were questions about the Kaibab National Forest application. There were none, and the discussed moved on to the Tonto National Forest application. Chair Rogers questioned the expenditure of \$52,000 for a gate, and some other issues. Ms. Racki noted that this application is part of the Sycamore Creek project, which has been incredibly impacted by irresponsible OHV use. She says that this project will help control access at the access points that exist now. Chair Rogers noted that the engineering specs do not seem to reflect a reasonable fence building technique. Mr. Biegel noted that a ramp for emergency vehicles or ATVs would be important. Further discussion closures and law enforcement followed. Ms. Racki noted that there are seven gates to be built in three different OHV sites.

Chair Rogers then asked that the OHVAG members nominate and elect a liaison to the grant rating team. Ms. Racki said that one member of OHVAG is selected to sit on the

grant rating team and rate/review the applications. The time commitment is approximately 1-2 hours per application for the review and discussion process. The first meeting is to learn the rating system, and receive originals of the application. The next meeting is the actual rating meeting, with Bob Baldwin, Amy Racki, one other ASP staff, and the OHVAG liaison. The OHVAG liaison does not have a vote on the final score, however their input is valued, and the liaison is able to discuss with OHVAG his or her personal thoughts on each application. The scoring is based on a point system on the eligibility of scope items and the completeness of the application. Then, the recommendations are sent to OHVAG, who then forward recommendations to the ASP Board for final action.

Mr. John moved to appoint Mr. Biegel as the liaison to the grant rating team. Mr. Pfeifer seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

3. FY2008 Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Fund Projects and Programs.

Ms. Racki opened the discussion by noting that a list of the project and programs currently funded. The Arizona State Legislature cut \$1.5 million dollars from the OHV Recreation Fund budget. In July the FY2009 budget will be announced. Generally at this meeting annually, OHVAG is asked what project and programs will be funded with the funds available from last year. The following projects were obligated funds this year, as per the last OHVAG recommendation: OHV Ambassadors, Dealer Education, Small Projects (under \$10,000), and \$15/mile to pay for land management agencies to do route evaluation. The OHV Ambassador program is less costly dollar-wise, however the expenditure in time from volunteers is high. The training for motorcycles costs ASP some money, but we can use the ASP administrative and RTP education funds to continue the OHV Ambassador program. The administrative funds amount to approximately \$100,000. Ms. Racki noted that the large trailers are an integral part of the OHV program, and purchasing another trailer may be possible using the RTP education funds. Even with the cuts, ASP is working to continue the good work of the OHV programs. The FY2009 budget, as noted, has yet to be announced.

Ms. Racki noted that on page five, beginning with item 34 on down, shows projects that have potentially lost funding due to the cut. This was sent to the state budget analysts. Items on that list from 1 – 33 have been funded. Beginning on page six, there are projects that have been impacted but that may not be funded because of the cuts; these lines represent Ms. Racki's estimates.

Last year, OHVAG approved \$1,033,000 of which some funds were obligated. The ASP did not want to have to take back funding from projects, therefore \$500,000 were not obligated. Another \$1,000,000 of potential funds will go back to the general fund as well. However, with reallocating funds from the administrative "pot", the RTP education "pot" and so on, some funds will be available to continue the OHV Ambassador program and the Dealer Education program. The Small Projects program will basically be shut down with the exception of existing projects. There is a possibility that the Small Projects program could be a part of the grants program, but that discussion remains to be held and

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will not occur this year. Another program that has disappeared because of the cuts is the \$15/mile route evaluation assistance program. Transportation studies on OHV signage might have been supported by ASP, but this will not happen at this time.

Ms. Racki noted that the biggest impact to the OHV Ambassador program will be the interface with the Sheriff's departments in the various counties. Another project that will not be funded may be the continuation of the cultural evaluation on the Lake Havasu Standard Wash project if additional funds were needed for completion.

Basically, the focus will be on the OHV Ambassador program, the Dealer Education program and the 2010 State Trails Plan, which comes from administrative money. The FY2009 budget may produce larger cuts in the overall budget for the state. Ms. Racki discussed the history of earlier budget cuts and their effect on OHV in past years. She also noted that in ASP, \$4,000,000 had been taken from the State Lake Improvement Fund (SLIF). Further information on FY2009 budgeting will be available at approximately the end of June 2008.

Chair Rogers noted that these cuts demonstrate the necessity of shepherding the RTP grants funds sensibly. Joe Sacco noted the budget cuts to the AGFD as well. Chair Rogers noted that Ms. Racki should note OHVAG's appreciation for helping to keep projects working.

Ms. Racki also noted that the OHV Ambassadors group had held another training and "inducted" more volunteers. The program was highlighted in the national Department of Interior house publication, "Land and Water". The USFS also made a Congressional testimony, and Arizona was highlighted as an example of managing OHV usage through the OHV Ambassador program. Motorsports dealers may donate either shirts or jerseys and helmet skins for the Ambassadors. This will help identify the OHV Ambassadors. Troy Waskey has departed ASP to work with the USFS at the Tonto Basin. The OHV Ambassador program this year will focus on additional agency training, and an award program for the volunteers to occur in the fall. The partner agencies have been working hard on some of the administrative duties in the Ambassador program and the Dealer Education program. Dealer brochures are being distributed, and dealer feedback is being collected. Further discussion of the dealer packet/program graphics followed.

Ms. Racki also noted that a press release regarding Mike Sipes and his service to OHVAG had been sent to his local paper, but the paper did not pick-up the release and print it. Mr. John suggested sending the releases to the new members to place in their local papers. Ms. Racki is preparing a release on the impact of budget cuts to the OHV program in Arizona and the status of the programs and projects.

Ms. Racki also noted that there are 15,000 OHV Ambassador envelopes available to stuff and pass out at meet-and-greets from the Ambassador program. There are also Nature Rules stickers/cards available and Ms. Racki handed out the give-aways. Mr. John suggested that the give-aways be part of the dealer packet.

4. Discuss OHV Legislation.

Chair Rogers said that he understands the legislation is still held up in caucus at the Legislature. Mr. John recommends contacting individual legislators to get the bill out of caucus and on to the floor. Chair Rogers noted that getting the bill out of caucus is one challenge; the next challenge will be a possible filibuster. He feels that the bill has a good chance of passing this time, however the actual outcome remains to be seen. Mr. John noted that the diversity of groups supporting this bill shows that it reflects the will of the people, and the legislators should be willing to respect that. Further discussion on the bill and public sentiment followed. Contact with the individual legislator in the members' districts is very important.

E. PRESENTATIONS

None.

F. REPORTS

1. Chair's Report

No report.

2. Staff Reports

a) Update on ASP Board Actions

Ms. Racki reported that the ASP Board met on April 4, 2008 and appointed the new members, and discussed the makeup of OHVAG.

b) Report on OHVs and Air Quality

Ms. Racki noted that there are route closures planned in Maricopa County regarding maintaining air quality set by the EPA. Every city has enacted new air quality ordinances, and some are incredibly strict. The City of Scottsdale has passed one of the most stringent ordinances, which will affect State Trust Land in the area. There are dust related OHV issues to be addressed in the Granite Mountain area. Further information will be provided as it develops. Chair Rogers says that these rules do not affect just OHV users, and there may be some involvement from different stakeholders to help alleviate some of the issues. Ms. Racki will forward the rule compilation to the members when it arrives. Ms. McCullen noted that the Maricopa County Air Quality Department (MCAQD) had worked well with the OHV community. Ms. Racki agreed, and noted that the MCAQD GIS team is attempting to compile a comprehensive map of where OHV users can ride.

c) Human Resource and Travel Policies

No report.

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G. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. McCullen said that NOHVCC noted that RTP funds cannot continue to be rolled over each year, and all funds must be spent. There is a possibility that by 2012 the RTP funds will disappear altogether. She recommends contacting the Congress-person for the individual members' district.

Mr. Biegel noted that there are slots open for Sheriff's Reserve officers in his area; that may help with the OHV Ambassador cuts. Ms. Racki asked that information be forwarded to her to disseminate. He also noted that the Pinal County Board of Supervisor's meeting will occur on June 18, 2008 at 9:30am and they will be rewriting the air quality rules for the county.

**H. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD
PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

I. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

August 8, 2008 at 1:00pm in Payson, venue to be determined. Payson should be more or less centrally located for grant applicants to attend the meeting. Ms. Racki asked if there would be an official field trip. Those who have ideas should provide them to Ms. Racki.

J. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Biegel moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Savino seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.